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ABSTRACT

The purchase of a Mobile Training Unit (MTU) allowed the Indiana Career Resource Center to disseminate Career Education materials throughout the State. This report presents the effects of that Mobile Unit Program. During the months between July, 1972 and May, 1973, the MTU made more than 67 visitations to Indiana schools and was used in a dozen professionally related meetings. With this initial experience, the following observations were made: the original design and purpose of the unit had been very functional; the efficiency of moving and presenting programs throughout the State had been demonstrated; and the visitations of the Mobile Unit to schools had a multiplying effect on other requests. In general the reception given to the services of the MTU has been enthusiastic. Recommendations made for the future are that: the servicing of students in addition to educators and community members is seen as a necessary addition; a more complete user evaluation should be attempted to measure the Unit's effectiveness in a variety of situations; and the Indiana Career Resource Center should facilitate the sharing of ideas among participants in neighboring career education projects. (KP)

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Mobile Training Unit - A Total Community Approach to Career Guidance

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The Indiana Career Resource Center has enjoyed four years of service to Indiana schools. During this period, the focus of attention has shifted from a local model in South Bend, Indiana, to a state-wide support system. By utilizing the existing talents of the educators of Indiana, the program has pyramided local efforts in implementing Career Education.

With the purchase of a Mobile Training Unit, the Center has carried concepts, materials, and consulting staff through-out the state. With this approach some of the basic goals and objectives of the original intent of the program have been met.

Statement of the Problem: With the National mandate to extend the concepts of career education through-out the fifty states, the Division of Vocational Education, State of Indiana, constructed guidelines for implementing the program at the State level. It became the task of the Indiana Career Resource Center to effectively communicate to Indiana educators the rationale and methodology of structuring meaningful career education models for classroom guidance and for curriculum infusion. There were many questions concerning the hurdles to be overcome for an effective program. Among the questions concerning the effect of a Mobile Unit Program were:

1. Will the information reach a large enough population of Indiana educators?
2. Will it serve as a visible means of implementing career education?
3. Will it provide adequate contact with the career education services of the State Department of Public Instruction?
4. Will it serve as a model for other State and National projects?

Analysis and Findings: Between July 1, 1972 and May 31, 1973 the Mobile Training Unit made more than 67 visitations to Indiana schools and was used in a dozen professionally-related meetings in all areas of the state. With this initial experience, the following observations were made:

1. The original design and purpose of the unit has been very functional.
2. The efficiency of moving and presenting programs through-out the state has been demonstrated.
3. Visitations of the Mobile Unit to schools has had a multiplying effect on other requests.

Conclusions and Recommendations: The reception to the services of the Mobile Training Unit has been enthusiastic. Educators through-out the state have expressed their endorsement of the goals and methods of the program. With a careful consideration of the following recommendations, it is felt that the program can make and even greater impact in service.

1. Servicing students in addition to educators and community members is seen as a necessary addition.

2. A more complete user evaluation should be attempted to measure the Unit's effectiveness in a variety of situations.

3. The Indiana Career Resource Center should facilitate the sharing of ideas among participants in neighboring career education projects.

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INTRODUCTION

The history and growth of the Indiana Career Resource Center has been one of intense pride to those who have participated in the project. The primary reason for the continued growth and expansion of the project has been the encouragement and support of people at all levels of government, and by the people it was originally designed to serve - the classroom teachers. A brief history of the Center's activities might be beneficial for the reader to witness the direction and expansion the Center has taken.

The Indiana Career Resource Center has now completed four years of development as a model to serve the career educational needs of Indiana schools. During that period of time, the development of a workable model for career resources delivery was a primary concern. The major concentration of that service had earlier been within a radius of one hundred miles of South Bend.

This localized school contact had provided a wealth of experience in pre-service and in-service education of school personnel that could be utilized to foster career education practices. Beginning this last fall, the programs and approaches that had proven successful during this development period have been made available to educators throughout the state.

In the spring of 1972, with the acquisition of a mobile training unit, the Center's focus changed from that of direct guidance of student groups to the training of educators. Training was offered at four levels of involvement by the participants. The levels were chosen by the participants in accordance with their need and understanding of career education. (A complete description of the levels of presentation is listed in Appendix A).

The Mobile Training Unit

The choice of utilizing a motorized recreation vehicle as a means for information delivery of career information was based on three hypotheses. First, the process had to be utilitarian in design and delivery. With the flexibility of travel offered through self-contained equipment storage and personnel accomodations, no part of the state need be neglected. Second, the process had to have a pyramiding influence on the recipients. The opportunity of making the greatest impact in any one given area would depend on the usefulness of the information to the participating educators. They, in turn, through exploration and demonstration would inform others of career education techniques. Third, the process must inform the recipients of a manageable method of integrating career education into their classrooms. With a mobile educational laboratory, educators will have the opportunity to experiment with a variety of career model design approaches. From these they will select the ones that best fit their local needs.

The acquisition of the motorized mobile recreational vehicle seemed to best meet the criteria we had set in concert with the Vocational Educational Division, State Department of Public Instruction, for effective information delivery.

On about January of 1972, bids were let to three major producers of mobile homes. The general specifications to be met were the following:

1. The construction of the unit must be substantial to meet the physical demands placed on it.

2. It must be large enough to accomodate materials, staff and visiting groups, comfortably.

3. It must be simple in design and utility to require the least possible maintenance.

4. It must meet the specifications outlined for commercially owned vehicles of the sponsoring school district.

Barth Incorporated of Milford, Indiana was selected as the supplier after bids were received and evaluated. The final selection was a twenty-eight foot unit of the self-propelled type. After modification and adoption the unit was ready for use by the early part of March of 1972. The first use of the unit was as a participating program at the American Personnel and Guidance Association Program in Chicago. Since that time the unit has become an integral part of the services of the Indiana Career Resource Center.

PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT

The purpose of the project may be stated in the following:

1. To provide easily accessible information concerning career education to educators in Indiana.

2. To avoid costly expenditure for numerous in-service workshops throughout the State. Meetings dispersed geographically throughout the State with resulting travel and lodging for participants have usually been financially prohibitive.

3. To insure equal distribution of services to all areas of the State. The true test of any information service would seem to be, whether the information was received.

4. To maintain the integrity of the philosophical viewpoint of career education as intended by the Indiana Department of Public Instruction, Division of Vocational Education. Among the state-wide programs begun, nationally, the Indiana program offers a unique and practical approach to informing educators about career education. A strong part of the philosophical base to implementation in Indiana is the idea that the people who will be using career education in the classroom should be the principals in its design.

5. To act as a catalyst, through visitations, for local initiative and teacher creativity. Materials carried by the mobile unit may be the "well-spring" of many existing programs in classrooms throughout the State.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In order to meet the demands for additional information concerning career education in Indiana, it was decided that a more effective means of communications would have to be devised. Much of the commercially produced equipment was in the form of kits, machinery, and book series. Also, problems in supply were compounded because of the physical nature of the equipment and its difficulty of portability. Transportation of Center staff and equipment became a major consideration. In spite of the many problems faced, it was decided to try to be of assistance to as many educators throughout the State of Indiana as possible. Some of the questions needing resolution with regard to the use of a mobile unit for disseminating career education programs are:

1. Will it make possible the dissemination of career education information to educators who, because of local school responsibilities, were unable to attend state and national meetings?

2. Will it serve as a visible means of implementing career education? Can educators through the manipulation of materials and information gain first hand experience with career information?

3. Will it provide support to educators in their efforts to inform local communities of the dimensions and commitment of local career education projects?

4. Will it provide direct contact with the career education services of the State Department of Public Instruction of Indiana? Will it help to introduce to educators the variety of services available through the Department?

5. Will it house materials and packets of information to be given to educators who participate in the career education presentations? Can much of this information act as resource materials for teacher use?

6. Will it provide additional space for demonstration and meeting, which seems to be less disturbing to the normal routine of some of the schools visited?

7. Will it serve as a model for other state and national projects for the dissemination and training opportunities for career education? Will inquiries from other national programs be made asking for assistance?

8. Will it generate a genuine enthusiasm among the participating educators visited?

9. Will it provide an opportunity for a team approach in building a career resource model in school?

10. After a visit with the unit, will further requests for services be forthcoming?

11. Will the participants feel the experience was worthwhile, and will there be a general expression of appreciation?

12. After a visitation, will local news media report the efforts being made by the Indiana Department of Public Instruction to support school districts in career education information?

13. Will the program offer practicable ideas to educators?

14. After the visitation, will the participating school district continue in their efforts to build a career program?

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

In the past year, between July 1, 1972 and May 31, 1973, the unit has made over 67 on-site visitations to schools in Indiana. Over half of the school districts in Indiana received direct visits from the mobile training unit. Another portion received visits and consultations from the Indiana Career Resource Center staff. The unit has also been used in over 12 professionally related meetings throughout the state. The geographic distribution of visitations has been in all areas of the state ranging from Gary to Clarksville and from Terre Haute to Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Some of the findings during the past year of operation of the mobile training unit are listed below. These findings were made by staff observation and letters received throughout the year. These letter responses can be classified into two areas. One, those dealing with general request for information about the services of the unit, two, letters received concerning the participants views of the services received through the visitation of the mobile unit. A sampling of these types of communications is included in the attached appendix - B and C.

1. Its original design and concept have been very functional as to purpose. With modification of instructional units and further packaging efforts, it is hoped that efficiency of service will be enhanced.

2. The ease and versatility of moving and presenting programs through-out the state, has added to the efficiency in program planning, not only from the Center's view point, but also from the view point of participating schools. Upon arrival at a school site, the unit immediately becomes a supportive resource for teacher training and library resource.

3. Further study needs to be done in miniaturizing resource information and substantive data. Because of the variety of formats of presentation used by commercial companies in program presentation and reading materials, utilization of space has become a major consideration.

4. Visitation of the mobile unit to requesting schools has had a multiplying effect on other requests. Through news releases and school coverage, other schools have requested that the mobile unit make a visitation to their district. While it has been difficult to meet all requests, all requests have been met through cooperative scheduling by the Center and participating schools.

5. A file of responses made by the schools visited has been kept at the Indiana Career Resource Center. An overwhelming majority of the responses express an extremely positive attitude toward the visitation of the mobile unit, demonstrations and assistance of the accompanying staff.

6. Educators have expressed enthusiasm about the Center's mobile unit services. They have commented favorably about the flexibility of scheduling, and array of materials carried aboard the unit.

7. The participants appreciated the opportunity to have time to examine the concept of career education. They stated they felt it worthwhile and that the sessions helped them to form a team for action in implementing the program.

8. Letters received by the leaders of the local programs, stated that after the visitations, efforts were continuing toward implementation. They further stated that the ideas presented by the Center staff were practicable and workable.

9. The worth of the mobile program seemed to be verified by the numerous requests for additional further visits.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The response to the services of the mobile training unit from educators and community people has been reassuring. Educators throughout the state have been very enthusiastic about the concept and materials offered. They have been wholly receptive to the project's goals and objectives. They have also been favorable toward the easy availability of the service to members of the staff and members of their community.

Most have expressed a very favorable attitude toward the individual attention given their school districts in supporting efforts of implementing career education. Flexibility in scheduling time has lent itself to the particular needs of the participating schools.

Among the recommendations that seem to have priority at this time are the following:

1. Additional financial assistance seems to be necessary at this time to cover the expenditures listed below.
   a. Because of the demands made upon the original operation of the Center, the cost of maintaining staffing and secretarial support of the unit has over-burdened the operating budget of the Center.
   b. Indirect costs such as fringe benefits, materials supply, telephone, and mailing were not fully included in the original request.
   c. Although this is not part of the original intent of the grant allowed to the Center, requests requiring additional expenditures have come from teacher training institutions throughout the state for pre-service support.
2. In order to achieve a more flexible use of the unit facilities, attempts are under way to support both student and community needs. Programs and materials are being revised to meet these needs for expanded services. These would be in addition to teacher training and professional displays already in use. Some might include student vocational counseling materials, pre-service programs at the college level, and community affairs information services.
3. One of the most profitable resources for teachers in the past year has been the opportunity for exchange of ideas with people in state supported projects.
4. Next years plans include an evaluation form to accompany mobile unit presentations.

In an attempt to facilitate these meetings, the staff plans, in the future, to have these resource people accompany the mobile unit on visitations.

The above recommendations are made with the hope that the project will assume even more versatility and systematic service to education throughout Indiana.

The help of the staff members listed below made the state-wide services of the mobile unit possible.

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